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No biological or medical research has hitherto been carried out among the Tallensi or their nearest neighbours. Hence it is impossible to determine how far their physique, efficiency, and standard of health have been affected by their low scale of nutrition. To the lay observer they do not appear to be stunted or to show a high incidence of physical defects. They are fortunate in living outside the sleeping-sickness zone, but the common endemic diseases of the region are rife among them. The natives have no reliable remedies for these diseases, and the Government dispensary at Zuarungu, the only regular medical service provided for the district, cannot cope with more than a fraction of the sick. From the point of view of physical health the Tallensi of to-day are probably little better off than their fathers were.

Native habits of dress and personal hygiene are doubtful assets from the point of view of health. Children go stark naked till adolescence, in the case of boys, and till their first pregnancy in the case of girls. Women go naked except for the perineal band. Men always wear a loin-cloth for the sake of modesty, but it is usually grimy with accumulated dirt. In addition, a man usually wears a goatskin or sheepskin, or a ragged remnant of an old tunic or cloth slung across his back, as his working garb; clothes are worn only on special occasions.

Whether or not these customs of dress are injurious, the indifference of the Tallensi to bodily cleanliness cannot be beneficial to their health. By European or Coast African standards, the Tallensi and their neighbours are dirty people. They wash only rarely, especially in the dry season. This is due, in part, to the scarcity of water and to the fact that soap is still an expensive luxury, but also in some measure to native ideas of cleanliness. Tallensi do not object to body dirt. Only young dandies and marriageable girls take pride in a 'clean skin' as a mark of beauty and wash regularly. It is not surprising, therefore, that the most superficial wounds usually fester.

The sanitary habits of the natives are equally primitive. A homestead is usually kept fairly clean indoors, but the live-stock yard is inside the homestead, and the accumulation of manure there, as well as the refuse midden just outside the entrance, are the breeding-places of swarms of flies. Then, also, the natives defecate just outside their homesteads. The stench around a Tale homestead in the rainy season is enough to shake the hardiest anthropologist. These noisome accompaniments of home-life do not trouble the natives, who look upon animal manure and human excrement as essential fertilizers for their farms.

In spite of these hardships and hazards Tallensi set a very high value on their culture and way of life. In his workaday life the native gives an impression of being a steady, sober person with a good grip of himself. He can work hard if necessary, but he can enjoy idleness too. Wasteful and extravagant at times, especially on certain ceremonial occasions, he is normally frugal and abstemious. A keen sense of property and of the value of material goods goes with generosity to kinsfolk and friends. Though he is no stickler for the letter of custom, he attaches great importance to social rights and obligations. Respect for social and genealogical superiors is a strong point of Tale etiquette, but natives are rarely

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obsequious among themselves. With all their respect for custom they are not its slaves. Individual initiative, ambition and independence of action, within the limits imposed by their social and material order, are common. 181 183

Tallensi do not question their traditional ritual values, but there is an element of what we should call rationalism in their religious attitudes. Their ancestor cult, an elaborate body of beliefs, rites, and ceremonies, is minutely woven into their everyday existence, but it does not pursue them with phantom terrors. On the contrary, it is the principal means provided by Tale culture for keeping the individual and the group on an even keel.

Stability; tolerance of physical hardship and discomfort as well as of human frailty and idiosyncrasy; a reasonable degree of conformity; a tenacious attachment to life fortified by an elaborate ancestor cult—these characteristics of Tale culture strike the observer at the outset. On the surface the Tale ideal is to have enough to eat, to be a successful parent, and to live at peace with one's fellows. Closer acquaintance, however, reveals hidden undercurrents. Beneath the overt stability and integration of the social order lie continuous tensions. Indeed the stability of Tale society can only be understood as a product of these tensions, created and maintained by the social processes that resolve them. Again, the natives' keen sense of the importance of social obligations hides a tendency to aggressive self-assertion. Tallensi are quick to anger if they feel themselves wronged, and are good haters. Their usual spirit of good-natured tolerance masks a proneness to suspicious watchfulness, and their frugality covers a spendthrift streak. These contradictions are subtly revealed in their religious practices. The strength of their ancestor cult rests not only on its predominant role as an integrating force in their social structure, but also on its profound psychological value for the individual. Tallensi react to misfortune with strong anxiety and guilt feelings from which they find a refuge in their ancestor cult.

This sketch of how the Tallensi strike a European calls for qualifications. It is couched in terms of our cultural values in order to help us to visualize these people in terms of a familiar vocabulary and automatic mental images. Objectively, from the standpoint of the people themselves, the value judgements implicit in our description lose their meaning. What we see as their poverty, dirtiness, poor health, and rudeness of culture they accept with equanimity as the normal conditions of their life. They have no grievance or shame about them. Being common to everybody, these conditions do not create rifts in their society or maladjustments in the individual as they do with us. They are in one respect simply part of the atmosphere within which the culture of the Tallensi (and their neighbours) develops its own richness and amplitude; in another, the material of significant themes in that culture.

Every aspect of Tale social life is conditioned by the fact that they are a primitive peasantry. There is no division of labour apart from that of the sexes. Censuses taken in various parts of the country show that not less than 95 per cent. of the adult males are wholly dependent on agriculture for their livelihood, and all of the odd 5 per cent. are partially dependent on the same source. Craft specialists work at their crafts only 181 241 463

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in their spare time, and chiefly in the dry season when there is no farm work. They are exceedingly few in numbers—one or two in a settlement—and their work is of mediocre quality. The only blacksmiths in Taleland are about a dozen men of the Sakpee clan of Tenzugu, and only one of them derives a substantial part of his livelihood from his craft. A leather-worker or two, a potteress, a sewer of caps, may be found in almost every settlement. Some men and women who are more skilful than their neighbours at making articles of common use such as hen-coops, baskets, bows, adze-shafts, &c., are in the habit of making a few for sale every dry season. The only specialized occupation is that of the diviner, and it, also, is a part-time occupation in addition to farming, though a popular diviner, making perhaps a shilling or eighteen pence a day, may farm less land than he normally would. Diviners are numerous. There may be as many as ten or twenty in a large settlement, but only one or two of them will earn more than a few pence a day by divining.

British Rule and Contact with Western Civilization

Until the time of my first visit to Taleland the natives had been very little influenced by the agencies of British government and of European civilization that are active in these parts. The main roads skirt Taleland so that the flow of north- and south-bound traffic by-passes the largest part of the area. Nevertheless, these roads have served to open up Taleland to a wider sphere of intercourse with other parts of the Gold Coast than was possible twenty years before. Political and social conditions made it impossible for people to travel freely beyond a radius of a few miles from their own settlements in former days. To-day young men and even women go in increasing numbers every year, in the dry season, to Tamale, Kumasi, or the coast towns. Some go to visit friends or relatives, some carry fowls for sale, others go as seasonal labourers, and others go to work abroad for a term of years. In 1923 the Administration of the Northern Territories reluctantly agreed to assist in the recruitment of labour for the mines and cocoa farms of Ashanti and the colony. The experiment failed and was soon abandoned. Nowadays labour migration from the Northern Territories is entirely voluntary. It has become linked up with the normal economic life of the natives. Whereas, in former years, a young man moved out temporarily to the periphery of settlement on account of a shortage of land in his natal community, nowadays he often goes to Ashanti or the mines as a labourer. The cessation of agricultural activity in the dry season makes it easy for a young man to get away for a few months without loss to the routine of farming.

Economic incentives, which the natives sum up as 'the desire for money', therefore lie behind much labour migration in the Northern Territories. And the value of money may be gauged from the fact that a hen could be bought for 6*d*. to 1*s*., a cow in good condition for £2. 10*s*., and a dish of porridge enough for a satisfying meal for 1/10 of a penny in any market in 1934–7. But there are other incentives as well. Curiosity, and the desire to see the places and experience the life which those who return from a stay abroad describe to their fellows at home, stimulate many a youth to go south for a short or long period. And friction with

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started and transmitted them. Custom is not inviolable in its own right. It is compelling because it is the legacy of the ancestors.

These notions are perfectly explicit in the behaviour and thought of the natives, for whom they have a profound moral value. *Banam ndaa ɛŋ de, yaanam ndaa ɛŋ de*—our forefathers used to do it, our ancestors used to do it, is a recurrent formula in every ceremonial speech or ritual invocation during the Great Festivals. So the Samiitna'ab protesting his loyalty to traditional values and to the Kpata'arna'ab, in the latter's feud with the Gɔlibdaana, exclaimed: 'It is the young men who are causing the trouble. They desire their cloths and their caps; but I know only what my ancestors did (*man mi la n-yaanam ndaa ɛŋ siem*). My ancestor (*n-yaab*) wore a skin and I, too, wear a skin; my ancestor knew nothing of cloth. I know only my forefathers' path and I adhere to that (*man mi la mbanam suor, man dɔla dɛni*).'

In the same way, and because their social system engenders so strong a sense of the continuity and stability of their culture and social organization, Tallensi always stress the importance of passing on to their descendants the way of life bequeathed to them by their forefathers. At ceremonies or when disputes are argued out before a chief or a lineage head, it is not uncommon to hear the old men praise the young men who attend. 'Thus,' the old men say, 'they (the young men) will learn the customs (*yɛla*) of our ancestors.' Tallensi place an extremely high value on their social order. An individual or a particular corporate group might desire to alter his or its position in the society. A man might desire to have greater prestige or more power than his neighbours. A clan might strive to assert its supremacy over other clans, whether or not it is entitled to do so. No one would dream of trying to overthrow the whole social order or of agitating against the existing customs and values.

This does not mean that Tale customs never change, or that the Tallensi believe this to be the case, or invariably resist cultural changes. There have been many shifts in custom and usage during the past two decades. The imposition of peace and an embryonic judicial system have diminished the tensions that kept unrelated clans apart and so have made it unnecessary for them to over-emphasize the emblems and symbols of their separateness. Fifteen years ago men of a tendaana's clan used to observe strictly the taboo against wearing gowns and trousers, the distinctive garments of chiefs and men of chiefly (i.e. Namoo) clans. To-day the young men of tendaanas' clans all wear such clothes outside the territory with which they have direct ritual ties. By this simple compromise they make the best of both worlds, the old world of strictly defined local, genealogical, and politico-ritual exclusiveness and the new world of free movement, unrestricted social intercourse with all and sundry, and cheaper clothes. They wear the ancient prescribed garb of a skin and a loin-cloth on ritual occasions, especially during the Great Festivals, when they take a pride in advertising their politico-ritual status. This change of custom does not cut athwart the basic values and principles of Tale social organization. It has arisen because the young men of tendaanas' clans are as eager to display themselves in fine clothes as the young men of other clans, and because the wearing of clothes is economically easier to attain than

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basis, for instance, of their technique of divination, which depends on rapid and spontaneous inference from stereotyped signs and symbols.

These myths provide yet another illustration of the indifference of the Tallensi to the origins of their customs. The emphasis in their culture is on conduct, not on creed; on performance rather than on doctrine. At the same time, these myths express, as we have previously noted, the basic postulate of Tale philosophy—that the ancestors are the *fons et origo* of their whole social order—and they show also how the natives visualize their totemic taboos as symbols of the moral and ritual bonds imposed by agnatic descent.

The Totemic Avoidances of the Talis as a Reflex of the Social Structure

We can now resume our analysis of the relationship of Talis ritual observances to the social structure. We have considered certain funeral rites and totemic avoidances as the chief indices of structural differentiation. We have seen that they are not, as the natives sometimes imply, hard-and-fast criteria. They mark off the Talis cluster from the Namoos in a broad way, but reflect the overlapping between them which our study of the clanship system has brought out. And among the Talis themselves, though there is a considerable congruence between genealogical grouping as determined by the canon of agnatic descent and distinctive ritual observances, it is not a one-to-one relationship.

The funeral customs and totemic taboos we have reviewed have one feature in common which helps to explain why the natives think of them as indices of social differentiation. They are tied to the agnatic line, passed on from father to child just like membership of the lineage. They owe their binding force to the fact that they were, according to native belief, instituted by the ancestors of the lineage or clan. Hence arises a significant common element, the oath associated with the observance. Breach of the ritual observance or using the oath falsely is blasphemy against the ancestors.

We pick up this thread again in another sphere of the ritual system of the Talis. It is a common opinion in Taleland that the taboos against eating the tortoise and water-tortoise are specially characteristic of the Hill Talis. And the reason always given for this is that these taboos are connected with the Talis cult of the External *Bɔyar*. Among the Hill Talis, if a child transgresses the taboo (*galɔm kihɔr*) by eating of the forbidden animal, its father 'pays' (*yɔ*) a fowl to the External *Bɔyar* of which his clan is an adherent. The fowl is sacrificed at the *Bɔyar*, with apologies for the transgression and pleas for the child's future well-being. A fine is thus paid to annul the trespass, and the smallness of the fine is evidence that the trespass is not considered serious.

As a rule, the group of clans and maximal lineages forming the congregation of a particular External *Bɔyar* all have the same avoidances. Thus, all the units that owe ritual allegiance to Bona'ab, the External *Bɔyar* of Kpata'ar and its associated lineages, taboo the tortoise and the water-tortoise. Hence, individuals who are the spiritual wards of Bona'ab may not eat these animals, and, if they belong to other clans or other

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This mystical power is focused for a particular social group in the Earth shrines of their own settlement—that is why the Earth animals are not sacred in the bush. And the ritual efficacy of the Earth at a particular place depends on its connexion with a particular social group holding the office of tɛndaana for that place. The animals therefore symbolize the moral relations of men, as these are determined by their social ties with particular tracts of the earth. They symbolize the function of locality in Tale social organization.

One logical element in this symbolism is obvious. The mystical 'livingness' of the Earth is symbolized in the living creatures it harbours. But this is not all, for otherwise other earth-dwelling creatures might have been selected as well.

The special relationship of the sacred Earth animals with the clan holding the tɛndaanaship for the area is focused in one species, as a rule. Thus the python is specially sacred at Gbizug, the crocodile at Zubiuŋ. To kill one of these animals at home is almost as bad as murder. For they are more than Earth taboos; they are 'ancestors' (*yaab*, pl. *yaanam*) to the group concerned. If found dead in the settlement, they are given a token funeral. The sacred crocodiles living in the Zubiuŋ water-hole are treated with an almost human familiarity. 'They are our ancestors, they would not injure us', the people say. In some clans carnivores like the leopard or the lion have this function, but are not considered Earth taboos. The natives say that their ancestors who have held politico-ritual office 'rise up again (*ihigərəme*)' after death as these animals. Tallensi deny that this is a belief in reincarnation or in the transmigration of souls. These taboos have attributes of totems, of Earth taboos, and of personal ancestor symbols; and the common thread is the notion of the ancestors as a living mystical force, symbolized in living creatures. The animals symbolize the immortality of the ancestors, that is, their efficacy and power in the life of their descendants. The ancestors are where their descendants are. One reason why the lineage is tied to its locality is because the ancestors are tied to it. They are spiritually present in the social life of their descendants in the same way as the sacred animals are present in sacred pools or in the locality with which the group is identified.

Functional Differentiation and its Symbolism

An important inference emerges from our argument. Lineage and locality are interwoven and interdependent factors of Tale social structure. But they are functionally discrete factors. We have previously seen how their interdependence is reflected in Tale religious ideology. We see now that their functional discreteness within the pattern of interdependence is also expressed in ritual symbols. The formally similar and associated but functionally distinct symbols we have discussed bring this out.

Tale society is highly homogeneous and integrated. But this is a resultant of the balanced interplay of a number of functionally discrete factors and of the inter-articulation of many clearly defined social units. Tale religion gives ritual expression and sanction to these principles.

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CHAPTER XIII

THE FORM OF TALE SOCIETY

The Socio-geographic Region

OUR survey of the macroscopic structure of Tale society has led us 181
from the consideration of the natives' habits of grouping themselves by name, through an analysis of Tale clanship, to the ritual institutions that form the crowning mechanism of co-ordination in the system, and finally to the internal structure of the settlement and the lineage. An ethnographer accustomed to think of a native society as a unit of social organization marked off by precise territorial, political, or cultural boundaries might protest against our frequent references to 'Tale society'. But this habit of thought, appropriate enough in dealing with island communities, nomadic tribes, or territorially organized states, must be discarded if we wish to understand the structure of societies like that of the Tallensi. For the concept of a society as a closed unit, a sort of thing distinguishable from like things in the same way as one house is distinguishable from another or one animal from another, we must substitute the concept of society as a socio-geographic region, the social elements of which are more closely knit together among themselves than any of them are knit together with social elements of the same kind outside that region. We must substitute a relative and dynamic concept for an absolute and static one. If we look at the area of Voltaic culture as a whole, we can imagine innumerable currents of social life flowing through it in all directions. There are major currents and tributary currents. They intersect in all sorts of ways. But at particular places the forces of which the currents are an expression act in such a way as to draw together a large number, if not all, of the major currents. These regions of maximum confluence would correspond to what we have called a socio-geographic region, or a society. If we follow any single current from a region of maximum confluence it leads us right out of that region into another region. It is only if we look at the region from within that we see the coherence it has as a result of the confluence of many social currents.

But metaphors are proverbially treacherous and we must return to our proper subject-matter. The concept of society we have formulated enables us to see clearly the most characteristic feature of Tale society. It is a segmentary[1] system. At bottom this is a consequence of the fact 631
that the Tallensi have not got a centralized, unified, political organization. 171
This is clear if we compare the Tallensi with some other African peoples such as the Tswana of Bechuanaland Protectorate,[2] the Bemba of Northern

[1] Cf. Fortes, M., and Evans-Pritchard, E. E. (editors), *African Political Systems*, 1940, 'Introduction', and Evans-Pritchard, E. E., *The Nuer*, 1940.
[2] Cf. Schapera, I., *Handbook of Tswana Law and Custom*, 1938, and 'The Political Organization of the Ngwato', in *African Political Systems*, cited above.

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over its destinies just as they controlled its social and economic activities in their lifetime.

A new homestead is erected for preference on the site of a man's father's or other patrilineal ancestor's *daboog*. Such a site is consecrated through having been the scene of human residence in the past, and through the abiding association with it of the ancestors who formerly lived there. If a man builds on virgin land, the site must not only be technically prepared for habitation, it must also be ritually won for human ends. Hence the tendaana under whose ritual jurisdiction the spot falls must first consecrate it, and the new dwelling must be magically protected against those vague personifications of irrational maleficence, mystically dangerous stones (*kubeet*) and trees (*tebees*). So complete is the identification of the family with its dwelling, that if persistent misfortune dogs the family after its removal to a new homestead, and all other ritual measures seem to have failed, the onus is finally thrown on the homestead itself. 'The house has not accepted them (*yir la pu diebame*)', the diviners discover. The whole complex of mystical agencies which endow the house with its moral value for the family is against them.

In the single homestead, as in the settlement of which it is the elementary cell and the structural epitome, Tale social organization has three fundamental aspects—material, associational, and moral. They represent the three major kinds of interests and ends that govern Tale social life. And though all forms of social relations among the Tallensi always have these three classes of components, they do not always work in harmony with one another.

In the homestead, as in the settlement, social relations move in two planes: the plane of lineage relations, in which the canon of agnatic descent dominates corporate action and directs individual conduct, and the plane of domestic relations, in which the bonds of marriage and parenthood, and the bilateral ties of kinship in the narrowest sense, control the behaviour of people towards one another. The persons who form a unit in one plane fall into separate, opposed units in the other. Husband and wife belong to mutually exclusive lineages; brothers by the same father but different mothers belong to separate matricentral segments of the family and are nuclei of independent conjugal families.

The Ideas and Values embodied in the Homestead

It is far truer of the Talɔŋ than of the modern Englishman to say that his home is his castle, though not as literally as Cardinall imagines. The natives of these parts, he declares, build their homesteads solidly and a bow-shot apart in order the better to defend them against hostile neighbours.[1] This romantic explanation, however, has

[1] Cardinall, A. W., *Natives of the Northern Territories of the Gold Coast*, pp. 2, 14.

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592 361 no foundation in fact. The climate, the kind of raw material which is plentifully at hand, the economic system, and the social organization of the natives rather than the alleged lawlessness of former times, determine their mode of house-building. In any case, homesteads very often stand closer than fifty paces together, the distance at which a mediocre shot can hit a tree—though I have seen an arrow carry four times that distance.

592 181 A Talǝŋ's home is his castle in the psychological rather than the material sense. It is the centre and fount of his major interests, his dominant purposes, his deepest emotional attachments, and his whole scheme of values; it is his shelter, his storehouse, the stage of his life's drama. The Tallensi, unlike many African peoples, have no age sets or initiation schools. A person grows up and receives his entire education at home. If he practises a craft, such as leatherwork, or is a diviner, his home is his workshop or consulting place.

As an adult, all his economic enterprise issues from his home and is devoted primarily to its upkeep. Unless he is one of the few *nouveaux riches* of to-day he keeps all his material possessions there, and houses all his livestock within its walls. His sex life, in maturity, is centred there. His children, the supreme object of his aspirations, are born and grow up in his home under his care and control. He worships his immediate forbears there. His personal destiny, past, present, and future, revolves about his home, its stages perpetuated in the many shrines and other ritual objects that are housed in it. He receives his friends and relatives at home, and dispenses hospitality there; and if he [461] has nothing to do would as lief recline under the shade tree at his own gateway as go making calls on others. Even the young men who like gallivanting about the markets spend much of their leisure at home.

592 181 626 The quintessence of his home, to a Talǝŋ, resides in his children, and above all his sons, the vehicles of his immortality. That is the essential meaning of *mar yiri*, 'to have a house'. Ask any native what happens to a man who does not adequately expiate a sacrilege such as murder. '*U yiri ŋmaarǝmǝ*—his house will fall to pieces,' is the answer, given with emphatic and solemn conviction, and often with circumstantial illustrations from experience or hearsay. A parent curses an insubordinate child, a chief or tendaana curses a clansman who has grossly insulted him, '*u ku nye yiri*—he will not see (i.e. have) a house', that is, he will die without offspring to perpetuate his line and to sacrifice to his spirit; and this is an extremely serious matter. It never fails to bring the culprit to heel with humble apologies. On the other hand, '*i na nye yiri*—you will have a house', is the most propitious blessing a diviner can convey to a man from his ancestor spirits.

592 593 Patrilocal residence and the tendency for the lineage to be localized give a man's domestic life greater continuity than a woman's. His natal family and his conjugal family are both strung on the same

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the *zɔŋ*, they symbolize the continuity of the lineage of which the master of that house is but one member, a link in a process to which he makes his greatest contribution as a father and head of a house. Hence the *zɔŋ* of a lineage head, being the sanctuary of all the lineage ancestors, is regarded as the *zɔŋ* of the whole lineage, and his *zanɔr* as the *zanɔr* of the lineage. When the Hill Talis were forcibly expelled in 1910–11 and their homesteads demolished, the heads of the maximal lineages later came back by stealth to rebuild a small part of their *zɔŋ* walls, for they could not appropriately sacrifice to their lineage ancestors elsewhere than in the lineage *zɔŋ*. If a woman commits adultery, she sins against her husband's lineage ancestors, thus imperilling the health and welfare of her husband and children. An adulteress, that is to say, transgresses the rights over her reproductive powers vested absolutely in her husband's lineage. Thus, if a woman is suspected of adultery she is subjected to the ordeal of entering (*kpe*) the lineage *zɔŋ* or *zanɔr*. She must face the ancestors directly, for she has committed an outrage against the lineage principle the absolute value of which is symbolized in and safeguarded by the ancestor spirits.[1] If she is guilty and does not confess, she will get ill and perhaps die. Women are terrified of this ordeal, which rarely fails to produce a confession.

Though they come and go freely in the *sapak* and *zɔŋ* in the ordinary course of domestic life, the women and children belong specifically to the domestic quarters proper. These lie behind a low wall (*yɛbəg*) a yard or so in height and about the same in length, at the back of the *sapak*. This wall usually runs between the back of a kitchen or storeroom and a large bullet-shaped chamber from 7 to 10 feet high and 6 to 10 feet in diameter at the base. This is the granary (*buur*). One suffices for a small family like Ɔndieso's. A wealthier man with a more numerous household may have one principal granary and one or more smaller ones. A granary has only one opening, at the top, covered with a lid of tightly plaited thatch like an enormous hat.

In the granary, again, Tale architecture embodies a fundamental element in the structure of the domestic unit. A bird's-eye view of a Tale homestead would show the principal granary as standing roughly in the centre of the circle of rooms, rising like a beacon between that section of the homestead which in use, thought, and feeling is the domain of the men, and that section which forms the living-quarters and is ruled by the women. The granary is the pivot on which the smooth working of the domestic unit turns. It holds the millet and guinea corn which provide the staple food of the natives. Without this, life cannot be satisfactorily sustained from one harvest to the next, and the household cannot exist, let alone keep its unity. What a sufficiency of food means to the Tallensi has been described in our previous

[1] This is the complementary notion to that of 'polluting the room' described above, p. 28.

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volume.[1] The granary symbolizes all the sentiments and ideas, the apprehensions and joys which the struggle for food evokes in Taleland. It stands for the security of the domestic unit in this struggle. In the organization of the household its importance comes from the fact that it is the focus of the economic cohesion and stability of the domestic group. Into it goes the product of the joint labour of the household, from it comes their sustenance. In filling the granary and in the consumption of its contents, the labour of men, women, and children is equally essential, and the rights of all equally valid. When a joint family splits up, the commonest pretext is friction over grain supplies. The family which hives off does so on the ground that it needs its own, independent food-supply. 'They have each his own granary (*ba mana ba buur ba buur*)', is the formula summing up the economic relations of brothers occupying a single homestead but having separate households.

The granary belongs to the head of the house, the *yirdaana*. No one may enter it without his authorization, least of all his wife. A devoted and trusted wife may be allowed to descend (*sig*) into it to issue the grain (*loo ki*) for cooking if there is no suitable male within reach—Tale conventions are not rigidly complied with if doing so involves excessive and absurd inconvenience. But it would be scandalous if she did so on her own initiative. The contents of the granary are formally the property of the head of the household, to be distributed at his discretion. There is no other place in the homestead which is so rigorously private to him. Besides the grain for current consumption, he stores the seed for next year's crop there. He hides a particularly cherished object, or money which he wants to conceal from other members of the family, in his granary, secure in the knowledge that no one will dare to tamper with it there.

The *zuŋ* enshrines—in both the physical and the ideal sense of this concept—the notion of the continuity of the lineage; the *buur* stands for the social personality of the *yirdaana*, as the centre of an independent domestic family, its economic fulcrum, its jural and ritual head, controller and representative. The position of the granary in the architectural pattern of the homestead corresponds to that of the head of the house in the structure of the family, as the unique link between its parts and the source of its unity.

Tallensi say that a man's soul (*sii*) is in his granary. Using the same phrase one says of a person, '*n siig mbɛ u ni*—my soul is in [drawn towards] him', meaning that one feels a special affinity with him. Among the Namoos the identification of a man with his granary is symbolized explicitly in the taboos that his first-born children have to observe.[2] A man's granary, his cap and tunic, his bow and quiver,

[1] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. xi. Also M. and S. L. Fortes, 'Food in the Domestic Economy of the Tallensi', *Africa*, ix. 2, 1937.

[2] Cf. *Dynamics of Clanship*, ch. v.

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343 181 are the emblems of his individuality. They participate in it, for they are imbued with his body 'dirt (*dayət*)'—a concept which has a physiological facet, meaning the exuviae adhering to a man's garments, quiver, or other objects constantly handled by him, and a mystical facet implying the quintessence of his individuality. The Talis also acknowledge this complex association between a man and his granary and other intimate possessions, expressing it in analogous customs, in the routine of family life and in their ideals of family relations.

351 To enter the living-quarters of a homestead one climbs over the low dividing wall (*yɛbəg*) at the back of the *sapak* by means of a step (*bimbimər*) and descends, by a similar step on the other side, into an irregular courtyard (*dɛndɔŋo*, pl. *dɛndɔna*) of beaten gravel, which is surrounded by a number of rooms. According to the wealth, rank, or status of the *yirdaana* this *dɛndɔŋo* varies in size from about 20 to about 6 square yards.

592 593 342 351 This *dɛndɔŋo* belongs to the principal woman (*dugdaana*) of the house. The *dɛndɔna* of junior wives are smaller. In Ɔndieso's house the senior woman is his mother's surviving co-wife, whom he calls his 'younger mother' (*mapit*, lit. 'mother's younger sister'), and who has remained with him since the death of his father. Her rooms occupy roughly the left half of the homestead, facing inwards from the *sapak*. From this *dɛndɔŋo*, turning right between a small room beside the granary and a larger room straight ahead, one enters a similar *dɛndɔŋo* in the middle of another set of rooms, those of Ɔndieso's wife. These take up roughly the right half of the homestead, facing inwards. The *yirdaana*'s mother's (own mother, or proxy-mother) rooms always occupy the position of honour in the centre of the arc; his senior wife's (*poyakpeem*) rooms lie on the right-hand side of these; his second wife's, or his younger brother's senior wife's rooms lie on the left, looking inwards. The rooms of the other wives of the head of the family or of his brothers are distributed as convenience dictates. For example, wives who are clan sisters will usually have adjoining quarters; wives who get on badly will be put in well-separated rooms. If none of a man's father's widows is living with him, and he has more than one wife, his senior wife occupies the central group of rooms, his second wife those on her right, and so forth. Generally the women's apartments all communicate with one another. But if a woman has a quarrelsome disposition or gets on badly with her co-wives for any other reason, her quarters will be separated from those of the next-door wife by a low party wall, to prevent undue trespassing by her co-wives or their children.

342 593 A woman's apartments make up a self-contained section in the homestead. This is her *dug* (pl. *dugət*). Basically *dug* means a single room, but it is extended to mean the single set of rooms belonging to one wife. In the Tale family every woman with children is entitled to her own *dug*. Women guard this right jealously, and if a man has not built separate quarters for his wife by the time that she has had her first child,

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CHAPTER IV

HUSBAND AND WIFE IN THE STRUCTURE OF THE FAMILY

The General and the Particular in the Pattern of Domestic Relations

611 IT is clear from Chapter II that *dɔyam*, the fact of birth, the event that fixes one's descent immutably, takes precedence over all other conditions governing the social relations and the social roles of a Talɔŋ. This principle comes out in all departments of Tale social life, and nowhere so plainly as in the organization of domestic life. We turn, therefore, to examine the working of kinship in the domestic family, which we have called the focal field of kinship.

593 It is important to bear in mind that kinship relations in the family group are inter-articulated in a single configuration, dominated by the *patria potestas* of the male head of the family. The relations of father and child are coloured by the relations of mother and child that coexist with them, and the relations of mother and child acquire a special accent in the context of the relations between co-wives. Particular domestic relationships appear in their true light only when they are considered as part of the total pattern. The polarity of *dug* and *yir* moulds them all; all play a part in the balance of centripetal and centrifugal forces in the structure of the family. All, moreover, are subject to the pull and pressure of genealogical connexions and groupings outside the family circle.

593 606 The natives are very conscious of this, and take it into account in the management of their lives. They say, for instance, that a woman's parents continue to have great influence over her for some years after her marriage and that is why her husband must keep on the good side of his parents-in-law. 'Don't you know what in-lawship means?' said Bayankura, somewhat lugubriously, when I found him hard at work helping to rebuild his father-in-law's homestead. Again, Tiezien's family believed that he was much under the influence of his senior wife, Tanzoo. So when by various pretexts he caused both of his late brother's sons to lose the young wives they had recently taken, they ascribed it morosely to Tanzoo's jealousy of their mother, Tiezien's second wife.

● 181 We shall not attempt a full-dress study of Tale family life; here we are concerned only with the structurally significant norms. In a society as homogeneous and economically undifferentiated as that of the Tallensi, people of the same sex, age, and social standing tend to have the same life history; and organized units such as the lineage and the family tend to have a stereotyped structure and development. The common denominators of action stand out.

828 156 Yet it is a constantly reiterated assumption of the natives that no two

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581 said, had never had the enterprise to find a wife. I heard of no woman
589 who had never married. Deformities which do not wholly incapacitate a person or arouse repulsion are not a bar to marriage. The blind, the deaf, and the lame find spouses if they are otherwise able-bodied and presentable.

Tallensi attach immense importance to marriage, not only because it is the sole means to the most ardently desired of all ends, the procreation of legitimate children, but also because no man or woman can adequately satisfy all his or her wants or lead a normal social life, after reaching maturity, without a spouse. Sooner or later a man must have a wife and a woman a husband. Hence 'finding a wife (*pʊya booga*)' is the most urgent preoccupation of unmarried men, apart from getting a living. Among unmarried young men it is an obsession, the most absorbing pursuit of their leisure and an interminable topic of conversation. A girl's life is entirely directed towards marriage from childhood onwards.

581 It is a common thing to find a group of men discussing the relative
●181 importance of farms and wives, the two basic practical interests of the natives. They seldom fail to come down to the fundamentals. I have heard an elder sum it up somewhat in this fashion: 'If you don't farm you will have no food; and if you have no food you die. Then what is the use of a wife without food? But if you have no wife you will have no children and your life is wasted.' In the end, however, it is usually agreed that farming is the more important, for the man who lives long enough will not lack a wife and without food one cannot support a family.

556 Land and wives have many features in common, as their juxtaposition in native thought shows. Both stand for the fulfilment of fundamental social needs. Both come under the jurisdiction of the lineage, though they are of direct service to individuals. But there are certain differences which show the special importance of wives. There is no intense competition for the possession of land. Owing to technical and economic limitations there is no inducement to accumulate land. Wealth—that is, property acquired by saving, or in exchange for surplus grain or cash—consists pre-eminently of livestock; and the use to which livestock is principally put is in acquiring wives, performing sacrifices, celebrating funerals, and, to a much lesser extent, competing for certain politico-ritual offices. Such wealth is, therefore, really equivalent to provision for delayed consumption or special forms of consumption arising out of ritual obligations or differences in status.[1] It has no durable productive value. Compared with livestock, the purchase of farm-land is insignificant

[1] But Tale standards of wealth are extremely low. Except for a handful of chiefs and headmen—who have herds of cattle numbering from 20 to 50, and, in at least one case, apparently, over 100, as well as numbers of small stock—a man with a dozen sheep, a few goats, and three or four head of cattle is considered to be wealthy (*boudoan*).

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593 It is useful to keep these general principles in mind in considering the details to which we must now give our attention. Putting it broadly, the relations of parents and children can be grouped in three general categories: relations of identification; of opposition or contra-identification; and of reciprocity; and the pattern in each individual case is the product of the interaction of these three categories. Our interest will lie chiefly in the structurally significant norms which give coherence and consistency to the multifarious variety of actual behaviour.

The Importance of 'Rearing'

● 181 We know that Tallensi regard the possession of offspring, particularly of sons, as the supreme purpose of life. To live long enough to see one's sons' children—to 'reach grandchildren (*paa yaas*)' as the natives say—is a gift surpassing all material wealth. Tallensi believe that it is better to die in poverty and leave children than to die childless but rich. We have seen, also, that they hold it to be the ideal of normal parenthood for physiological and social parenthood to coincide. This is more than a question of conferring social status by descent. From the native standpoint the important thing is that a child's natural parents are the right people to rear it, educate it, and control it.

861 Tallensi say that *ughug*, bringing up a child, is as vital a part of parenthood as *dɔyam*, bearing or begetting. There is a proverb, [538] 'Rearing is more important than bearing (*Ughug n-gaat dɔyam*)', often 431 quoted when they comment on the devotion of a person to a proxy or foster-parent. This is socially recognized in the obligation to give a 'cow of rearing (*ughug na'ah*)' to a foster-father out of the bride-price cattle received for a foster-daughter by her natural parent or guardian, and for a foster-son, when he returns to his natal home. It is, to be sure, only a moral obligation, but no self-respecting native would evade it. It is a recompense for the troubles the foster-father had to endure in bringing up the child. Tallensi feel strongly that it is not enough to bring a child into the world; one must also bring it up successfully, and that is the hardest part.

593 In spite of reshufflings due to widows remarrying and the instability 855 of early marriages, the majority of Tale children grow up with their natural parents. A census taken in 1934 showed that of 170 children estimated to be under 16 selected at random in one settlement, nearly 78 per cent. were living with their own parents. Approximately 20 per cent. were in the care of one natural parent and one proxy parent, and only 2 per cent. were orphans cared for by more distant kin.

593 Tallensi perceive that the social and personal relationships of a 861 particular parent with his or her children are a result very largely of the way the children are brought up. They stress the influence of 928 individual differences in personality in these relationships. There is always a personal bias in the way people interpret the accepted norms

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Taŋ to stay with him. Banorag furnished another instance. One afternoon he looked in on his way home from the market and found two elders with me. He told us he was having some trouble with Ziba, a young man of his inner lineage. Ziba had an old woman, whom he called 'mother', living with him; but he had suddenly decided to get rid of her. Banorag told us how he had expostulated with the heartless young man. 'It is an evil thing to do', he concluded, amid murmurs of assent from the two elders. 'A man who drives out an old woman to starve becomes blameworthy before Heaven (*u kpera Naawun taale*); it is *dulm*.' Banorag's efforts, in this case, were in vain since he had no paternal authority over Ziba. The intervention of an older kinsman does not always check disgraceful treatment of domestic relatives, and public opinion only takes notice of it after the event and then often has no power to make the culprit remedy it.

A Methodological Point

The cases we have quoted in the preceding pages are précis of statements, opinions, and explanations given to me by Tallensi themselves. If space allowed, a score of cases could be quoted for each one I have recorded. I mention this because it might seem incredible, to anyone who has not lived amongst the Tallensi, that a people so primitive in their mode of livelihood should balance up rights and obligations in the most commonplace activities of their lives in so calculating a fashion. But the picture I have sketched is not a distortion. Description and analysis inevitably reduce human action to slow motion and men's motives to a seemingly mechanical pattern. In reality Tale parents commonly act as spontaneously and generously as parents in any other country and their children respond as spontaneously and sincerely. But even the most spontaneous actions and feelings of the natives occur within the framework of their social organization and subject to the values postulated in their culture. Social organization and cultural values allow of alternative forms of action and affect in any particular situation, but not of infinitely numerous alternatives. Where the relations of parents and children are involved these alternatives are not unlimited; and allowing for differences of personality and character, as the natives themselves do, we can say that the alternative that will be selected in a particular situation is determined by the structural relations of the individuals concerned. Men's motives and their social relations are closely integrated with one another among the Tallensi, as we have emphasized before. In their actual social behaviour Tallensi do not have to stop and think out every situation before they act. The individual's ideas and attitudes have been shaped by the social structure and the cultural norms. The framework of his social relations is as much a part of him as he is a part of it. He automatically evaluates every situation in terms of his social relations. To put it crudely, every Taleŋ carries a set of

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labels bestowed upon him by the social system and a set of ideas and attitudes implanted in him by his culture. In every situation he responds to the relevant labels borne by the other people who enter into it with action springing from his ideas and attitudes. What we have tried to do is to examine this process of response in slow motion and to show how the ideas and attitudes evoked by certain labels can be traced back to the structural relations of the people concerned.

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across a recently sown field of early millet already a few inches high. I chanced to tread on a shoot. Immediately one of the small boys stooped and carefully raised and replanted the blade of millet. 'Why did you do that?' I asked. 'Don't you know that is our food?' he replied reproachfully.

2. Every small boy of 6–7 years and upwards has a passionate desire to own a hen, and many of them are able to realize this ambition. If you ask a small boy why he wants a hen he will reply in almost the same words as an adult uses to explain the importance of 'things' (*bon*). 'If you have a hen it lays eggs, and you take the eggs and breed chicks, then you can sell the chickens and buy a goat, and when the goat breeds you can sell its offspring and buy a sheep, and when the sheep breeds you can sell its offspring and buy a cow, and then you can take the cow and get a wife.'

3. Maanyeya, a little girl of about 9–10 years, said that she had eaten none of the meat of last night's sacrifice. 'Why?' I asked. 'When they sacrifice to Zukɔk', she explained gravely, 'women don't eat of the meat. If they do, they will never bear any children, they become sterile.' 'What's that to you?' I said. 'Am I not a woman? Who wants to be sterile?' she responded almost indignantly.

4. I was playing with Taɾɔmba and Yindubil (8–9 years), sons of the same joint family, and their friends. We were discussing parents. Taɾɔmba and Yindubil, speaking together, told me the story of the latter's mother. Three or four years ago she had run away from their father to marry another man. They said, in the very words that an adult member of the family would use, speaking seriously: 'She ran away and took our belly [that is, she was pregnant by their father] and went and bore over there, so our child is there. Then she bore another child there. When our child is big enough we will separate it [*polg*—the technical legal term] and bring it home.' These two were thus identifying themselves completely with the family, mother–child attachments notwithstanding.

Such examples could be multiplied tenfold, but they will suffice at this stage.

The adult attitude about education. Education is not an entirely unwitting process among the Tallensi. They set a high, and indeed overdetermined, value on their culture, and are fully aware of the fact that

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its continuity depends upon adequate transmission to their descendants. Their social structure, which is built up on the lineage system, and their economic organization put a premium on this, and a significant motive for stressing the continuity of their culture arises from their ancestor cult. Every Talaŋa desires sons so that there may be some one left to pour libations and make sacrifices to him after his death. The ancestor cult and family morality combine to imbue every man and woman with an intense sense of their continuity, both physical and psychological, with their parents on the one hand and their children on the other. A man feels a moral compulsion to pass on his private possessions, his craft, tools, and knowledge to his son, a woman to her daughter. He has the same feeling about carrying on a craft or cult which had been practised by a parent. Ironwork is not merely a profitable craft to the blacksmiths of Sakpee; it is a religious duty to their ancestors.

The most conspicuous affective moment in the religious system of the Tallensi is this sense of moral obligation to parents and children. It is the counterpart of the notion that the sins of the fathers will be visited on the offspring even unto the third and fourth generation. Last year, for instance, Kuwaas had to promise heavy sacrifices to expiate the sin of his grandfather, who was responsible, three generations ago, for the ravaging of his clan settlement by the Hill Talis.

The idea of education is, therefore, not only understood but also frequently formulated in discussions and conversations. A chief once observed to me that children learn who their fathers and ancestors (*banam ni yaanam*) were by listening at sacrifices. 'Our ancestor shrines are our books', he said. Nyaaŋzum, a man of 45–50, put these conceptions neatly and precisely one day when we were discussing some particularly secret ritual matters. His 'grandson',[1] a youth of about 25, was with us. 'Shall we send him away?' I asked. 'No,' he replied, 'if he listens it doesn't matter. He will not gossip to any one. And when some day I am no longer here, is it not he who will take it on? If he listens will he not know, will he not acquire wisdom?' When children are very small, he explained, they know nothing about religious things. 'They learn little by little. When we go to the

[1] Kinship terms placed between inverted commas are translations of native terms indicating classificatory kin.

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principal method of education is by participation. A child repeating the multiplication table is participating in the practical activity appropriate to and defined by the school; but measured by the total social reality it is a factitious activity, a training situation constructed for that purpose. The Tallensi do not make systematic use of training situations. They teach through real situations which children are drawn to participate in because it is expected that they are capable and desirous of mastering the necessary skills.

Corresponding to this contrast in method we can observe a contrast in psychological emphasis. The training situation demands atomic modes of response; the real situation requires organic modes of response. In constructing a training situation we envisage a skill or observance as an end-product at the perfection of which we aim and therefore arrange it so as to evoke only motor or perceptual practice. Affective or motivational factors are eliminated or ignored. In the real situation behaviour is compounded of affect, interest and motive, as well as perceptual and motor functions. Learning becomes purposive. Every advance in knowledge or skill is pragmatic, directed to achieve a result there and then, as well as adding to a previous level of adequacy.

The expectation of normal behaviour and organic response operate also in the education of a Western child, e.g. when it is learning speech or manners. In Taleland it is the most effective factor in the inculcation of a wide range of social behaviour from bowel and bladder control to ritual notions, and from economic skills to sexual habits.

Interests, skills, and observances. We have seen, now, that a Tale child acquires the interests, skills and observances which comprise the repertoire of adult social behaviour not in discrete categories but in a synthetic combination. But it is necessary, for analytical purposes, to define such categories of behaviour. They refer to forms of overt behaviour and not to the psychological functions or mechanisms subsumed therein.

Interests. By *interest* I mean simply the observable fact that, according to their level of maturity, Tale children and adults spontaneously show preference for some activities rather than others; that they have a selective orientation in their social space, e.g. reacting to some people more readily than to others; that they obviously seek to satisfy

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aims and desires in their activities and show a sense of purpose and sustained effort. Food, for example, is one of the dominant interests of Tale children. In 1936 the ground-nut crop surpassed all anticipations in some districts. An elder, referring to this in conversation a week or two before the crop was harvested, said: 'We have a surfeit of ground-nuts this year. Look at the children. They don't care about their mothers, they don't care about their fathers.' When food is scarce, he explained, children are for ever running in to their mothers clamouring for something to eat. Now they are out all day, and if they feel hungry they simply pull up a handful of ground-nuts to chew and are satisfied. Food, indeed, remains one of the dominant interests of a Talǝŋa from childhood to old age, and with the confluence of other interests and motives has a great effect on Tale economic life. Between the ages of 6 and 14 the interest of boys in food becomes linked up with other interests which have been developing during that period, e.g. in learning to use the bow and arrow, in the comradeship of boys of about the same size, in primary economic and technical processes such as herding and hoeing, in exploring the environs of the settlement, and so forth. Thus, a group of boys out herding cattle often have their bows and arrows with them, and when the cattle are grazing quietly they will search around for cane rats or birds to shoot as titbits.

From a very early age—before they can walk or talk—until adulthood children show a marked and explicit interest in the activities of their parents and older siblings and other adults with whom they come in contact. This is due, in part, to the unity of the social sphere. The children thus begin to adopt the cultural values of their society in infancy, as has been indicated above in our discussion of the social sphere. It may, however, be worth while repeating that children express a keen interest in farming, in livestock, in ceremonies, dances and recreations, and in the conspicuous current activities of their households, in their kinship relationships, and so forth, from the age of 3 upwards, long before they can actively participate in these affairs. But it is shown quite clearly in their attitudes when they are allowed to be present at adult activities, and in their fantasies as revealed in their talk and play, which revolve round the themes of adult social life.

Another group of interests significant for the educational development of Tale children is connected with their habitat. By the age of

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telling me one day about his dead mother. 'I want them to complete her funeral', he said at length, sadly, 'so that I can have my head shaved' (a ritual obligation). 'Why?' I asked. 'Well, is it not my mother?' he said. 'If I don't have my head shaved it is dirt' (ritual uncleanness).

This is typical also of the moral attitudes to the living, to parents and siblings, engendered in the normal course of family life. That is how children learn to be obedient, considerate of others, ready to co-operate, careful of household property, and so forth.

It is evident from the above examples that adjustment to authority and adjustment to equals act together in the child's acquisition of moral observances. But my observations have led me to conclude that authority is effective from an earlier age than the pressure of opinion from equals. From earliest infancy commands, accompanied by acts or gestures, are constantly being addressed to children. 'Go to your father', 'Take this', 'Come here'—as the child is lifted up, or pulled away from some object it must not touch. Until the age of 3–4, when they are walking and talking well, children appear to be indifferent to the presence of other children or indeed of adults other than their parents and members of their own family. I have watched two infants of 2–2½ years old, both walking, remain for over an hour within a few feet of each other without showing the least interest in each other. By the age of 3½–4 the Tale infant has emerged from this stage of egocentricity (as Piaget has termed it).[1] It will now run to join another child of this age or older, and likes to play with younger infants. It has now also become sensitive to public opinion to a degree not far short of an adult, and therefore capable of adjustment to others, as the following incident illustrates: I was chatting with Omara and a few other adult members of his house when his little daughter Sampana, aged about 3½ years, who knew me as a familiar and friendly visitor, ran out to see me. 'Give me some money,' she asked; and her manner, intonation, and posture were so like those of the grown-up women who often half-playfully asked me for money, that the whole company burst spontaneously into loud laughter. Sampana, obviously taken aback, turned tail and fled indoors where we found her sobbing with chagrin. 'She is ashamed at our laughter,' said Omara, still

[1] J. Piaget, *Language and Thought of the Child.*